

**Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
Capital Budget—NWT Housing Corporation
Increasing the Supply of Housing Units**

September 27, 2017

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have a general question, and the question is this: a number of the housing authorities had surpluses over the last number of years and there was some work going on for the Housing Corporation to work with these authorities to spend their surpluses, and I would like an update on whether an agreement has been reached on how those surpluses can be spent and what the parameters are around that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have been working diligently with the local housing organizations to address the surpluses. In my personal opinion, I don't think it's appropriate that Housing has surpluses when we have such dire need for housing within the Northwest Territories.

To date, the only one that we actually came to a firm agreement on was with the Yellowknife Housing Association, who had a surplus of \$600,000, and they will be working in partnership with us to develop single units within the community, and we are still working with the other ones. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I hear the Minister saying is that it is acceptable for the housing authorities to use their surpluses on construction. Do I have that correctly? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, at this point it is okay for them to use them on construction as long as they are within our business plan and as long as they're still meeting the needs within the population. They can't build and just do some kind of initiative on their own; it has to fit within the model of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: I thought I was on board, but then in the second half I kind of fell apart. They can use it on construction to address the waiting lists that they have in their communities. Would that be a permissible use of the surplus? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, they can use their surpluses to replace public housing units or to do major M and I to units that are in their communities. Or if they have a new project, then they would have to work in partnership with us to get the okay to do that.

For example, they couldn't say that we're going to build a complex that is going to address the highest income earners within the Northwest Territories; they would have to fit within the mandate of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Would you please clarify M and I?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. M and I means modernization and improvement, so it's basically repairing of units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Where I'm going with this is that the availability of units is an issue in some of the communities which may also have surpluses. What I understand is they can't build any additional units to address the needs on their waiting lists, but they can replace existing units or repair them. Is that the situation? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct; they cannot build additional units unless they are on our radar to be done. In every community we have a number of housing units that actually are unfit to put more money into, and so therefore within most every community we have needs for additional builds, but they would not be increasing the stock number, they would be replacing units that are on the books that need to be replaced. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my concern is that, we'll take Yellowknife Housing Authority as an example, they have an extensive waiting list. There are not enough units. They need more units. As I understand it, most of those units are in buildings, also.

How would that work in Yellowknife, where mostly people are in buildings and not in independent units? How could they replace or repair units in those circumstances or spend in ways that meets the needs of their waiting list, which is primarily single people? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, in the tax market communities there is a little bit of a luxury that those communities do have, such as Yellowknife, because there is a market rental so other agencies or people within the communities that actually provide housing period. Within the communities, such as Yellowknife, as the MLA said, currently we lease a lot of units with private landlords, so the building of an eight-plex for the 2018-2019 fiscal year would still accommodate the need because we would free up more of the normal market housing and still be able to address the public housing need within the community. It isn't increasing our stock; it's just opening up the market more and allowing more vacant units to be able to be accessible to the public in general. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How is the Housing Corporation helping the Housing Authority to address the need for units that are for single people in Yellowknife? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the case of the Yellowknife Housing Authority, they came to us with a proposal. We actually agreed to partner with them in that proposal, and so the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be putting in financial contribution towards building the units for singles within this community of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is this the eight-plex that the Minister just referred to? I am not sure what units are going to be built, how many, or that kind of detail. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct. It is the eight-plex that we are talking about. Thank you, Mr. Chair.